



# Home Tips®



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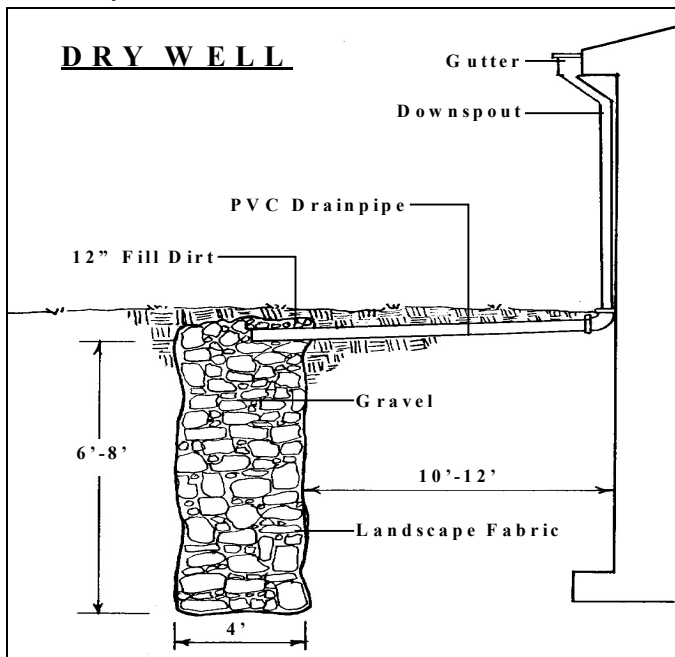
## Q & A

### What Is A Dry Well?

*We have a very flat yard with poor drainage. Every time it rains we have water seeping into our basement. We installed gutters and downspouts, but when it rains the water pools and runs down the foundation. We do not want to move all of our landscaping and have the entire yard re-graded. Is there another option?*

New homes are being built every day with the same problem. Even though the building code requires positive drainage away from the structure, some builders do not understand the requirements. Improper grading and downspouts dumping water at the foundation is the main cause for most of the basement water problems.

The best solution is to install drain pipes at each downspout and run them to a lower area of the yard. However, if the yard is totally flat, another option might be a dry well at each downspout. A dry well is just a hole in the ground filled with gravel. When it rains the water runs into the hole where it collects until the ground can absorb it. The system does have its disadvantages. Unusually heavy rains can overflow the well and heavy clay soils absorb the water much more slowly than sandy soils.



To make a dry well, dig a four foot diameter hole six to eight feet deep and ten to twelve feet from the house. Next, line the hole with landscape fabric which will allow the water to soak through and prevent the well from clogging with dirt and silt. Fill the well with large rocks or gravel until it's about a foot below the surface. Dig a trench from the downspout to the well and install a 4" PVC or corrugated drain pipe. Cover the remainder of the well with the landscaping fabric and fill the remainder of the area in with dirt. Finish it off with sod or grass seed.

Although I have not seen any, I have been told that some home centers carry a special round plastic container that can substitute for the gravel. The containers fill up with water and have holes for the water to soak into the soil. The only drawback is the cost which is around \$100.00 each and you will need one for each downspout.

### Smoke Odor In The House?

*We have purchased a home from people who were heavy smokers. The walls and ceilings have a yellowish film of tar that smells really bad. We want to paint but are afraid the paint may not stick. Is there any way to clean both the tar and odor?*

You are right about the paint not sticking to a dirty surface. You will need to clean the surfaces with a non-sudsing cleaner. Two brands that work well are TSP-90 and Soilax. These are available at most home centers or paint stores. You will need to mix 1 to 2 ounces to a gallon of water. Scrub with a sponge until the residue comes off. Next, wipe the surfaces with clean water and allow them to thoroughly dry. Then prime and paint.

### How Do You Add A Basement Bath?

*Our basement is unfinished and we are thinking about completing it.. We would like to add a bathroom but we were told the floor level is below the sewer line. Is it possible to add a bath?*

This is a very common problem for many homes with basements. The main item that will be required, is to install a sewer ejector pump.

You will need to remove part of the concrete floor in order to install the plumbing drains and the sewer ejector tank. The waste and vent piping are installed just as it would be for any

